COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course (formerly “ST-1710 – Theology: Method & Structure”) is an introduction to the nature, method, sources, and structure of theology, focusing on (but not limited to) the Roman Catholic tradition and St. Thomas Aquinas in particular. Issues to be considered include: the nature and method of theology, the relationship between philosophy and theology, the theology of revelation, and the role of scripture and tradition in theology. The course also introduces students to writing research papers in theology (3.00 units).

COURSE GOALS AND OUTCOMES: Through this course, students will come to an introductory grasp of certain central issues in fundamental theology, concerning theological method, revelation, scripture, and tradition. They should be able to discuss these issues in oral and written form, to engage in dialogue about them, and to begin independent academic research on them. Specifically, upon successful completion of the course, students will be better able: (1) to discern and describe the theological methods of theologians they encounter in their studies; (2) to describe the place of Scripture, tradition, and experience/knowledge/reason/philosophy in theology and in their own theological work; (3) to consult independently the work of St. Thomas Aquinas for further inquiry; (4) to describe their own method for their academic work.

FORMAT: Lecture, student presentations & discussion. In most class sessions, the majority of the time will be spent on lecture with questions and discussion, with some time for student reports and discussion.

INTENDED STUDENT PARTICIPANTS: This is an introductory-level Master’s course, intended for MDiv and MA students (and auditors with my permission). Although it is an introductory course, much of the subject matter is inherently difficult, due to the necessarily theoretical and philosophical nature of it; thus, it requires significant attention on the part of each student.

REQUIREMENTS: Students will be required to attend class, prepare oral presentations, and hand in written assignments. Specifically, students will be assessed on:

1. Attendance, Quizzes, and Brief Assignments: Students’ attendance and active participation in class lecture and discussion are integral parts of the course. Any student who misses three or more classes cannot receive a grade for the course. Quizzes on the assigned readings may also be given. Quizzes and Brief Assignments are not listed on the “Plan for the Semester” given below. (10% of grade)

2. Oral Reports: Students will be assigned (or, in some cases, will choose) texts from the assigned readings that they are to synthesize for presentation to the class on certain dates. The student must prepare an outline (no more than one side of one page) each time he or she is to present material to the class. A copy of the outline is to be submitted to me at that time. The number of students taking the class may affect how many times each student must prepare such reports. Each student should count on offering a report two to six times over the course of the semester. Oral Reports are not listed on the “Plan for the Semester.” (10% of grade)

Fr. Bryan Kromholtz, OP (DSPT), available at office at DSPT East room 120 during office hours (posted on door), or by appointment • 510-883-7151 • bkromholtz@dspt.edu
3. **Paper:** Students are to complete a research paper of 4000 to 5000 words (in main text, i.e., not counting notes, bibliography, etc.) on a topic to be agreed upon by each student and me. (See below, “**Research Paper Details,” for more on how the paper is to be done.) The paper is to be completed according to the following assigned progression:

**a. Topic Suggestions:** Each student must put forward, orally in class, one to three potential themes or topics of interest for the student’s own Paper, including possible *thesis statements*. Each student must be prepared to discuss these suggestions in class. The topic must involve some kind of *comparison*, such as a comparison of theologians on a given topic, of the respective theological methods of two theologians, of two positions on a controversial point, or of some other aspect related to the topics covered in the course. The topic or topics should suit the student’s own learning goals and the goals of the course. Each student must then consult me to obtain approval for the topic to be pursued. (5% of grade)

**b. Proposal:** With one topic approved, the student must next submit the Proposal (submitted by e-mail, with 200-600 words in main text, i.e., not counting notes, bibliography, etc.). The filename of the saved file must begin with the student’s own surname and first initial, followed by a brief title (example for a student named Anton Moreno: “MorenoA-Proposal”). The Proposal is to include topic *title* and an explanation of the aim of the paper, including a *hypothesis* (an initial thesis statement that may be revised as research progresses), *method* (a very brief description of one to two sentences in length) and *procedures* to be followed, a description of the *kinds of sources* to be consulted, *outline* (can be as simple as a few “bullet points”), and partial *bibliography* including at least all primary sources (no more than fifteen sources are needed) in “Turabian” format. No proposal will be accepted without a hypothesis (although the hypothesis may be radically revised as research progresses). The student must give a very brief (~1-3 min.) presentation of the proposal in class. (5% of grade)

**c. Initial Version:** Then, the student must submit (electronically) the Initial Version of the Paper for editing, to me and to two other students in the class (“respondents”), assigned by me. The Initial Version is to be a draft version, but *not* a “rough” draft; that is, it must stand alone as a complete paper, conforming to all standards in the “**Research Paper Details” section below. The Initial Version must include the paper’s *thesis statement* in its introduction. I will peruse the Initial Version, but I will not necessarily read all of it or correct it. The filename of the saved file must begin with the student’s own surname and first initial, followed by a brief but descriptive title (example for a student named Anton Moreno: “MorenoA-AquinasBonaventureRevelation”). (20% of grade)

**d. Edited Copies:** Each student will receive two Initial Versions. Each student must edit each of these received documents, making comments and corrections regarding substance, style,

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1. If the student wishes to write on a topic that does not involve a comparison, my permission is required.

2. Advice for topics: Make sure the *topic* is precise and very limited. It may seem so small as to be insignificant, but, in fact, you will need to understand a great deal about the topic in order to do research on one particular area. If, for example, you are interested in two theologians’ theological method, a good way to limit this might be to limit it further: e.g., look at their use of *Scripture* in theology.

3. For any electronic files containing coursework or other work that you send to professors, students, and staff for all work at DSPT, I recommend that you begin its title with your surname and first initial (for example: SmithJ-Paper1), unless the intended recipient (e.g., a professor in a class) directs you otherwise.

structure, spelling, grammar, etc. The student must then give an electronically Edited Copy for each of the two Initial Versions to both the writer and me. Please add “-ed” + your initials to the end of the original filename (Example for a student named Maria Chang for the Initial Version example above: “MorenoA-AquinasBona venturedRevelation-edMC”.) I will evaluate each respondent on the quality of his or her editing and comments. Among other things, responses may: 1. point out insights that one has found to be particularly noteworthy; 2. indicate problems or offer criticisms in a helpful and constructive manner; 3. suggest a solution to a difficulty, either in the ideas discussed or in the manner of the presentation. Respondents’ comments should be concise; a single sentence should normally suffice for each comment. The respondent may include an overall evaluation (comment and critique) of no more than 200 words. The total amount of time spent on editing each paper (including reading, correcting, and commenting on it) should be no more than three hours. (10% of respondent’s grade)

e. Presentation: Each student is to give a brief (10 to 15 min.) presentation to the class on his or her own Initial Version’s conclusions, including responses to substantial critiques or suggestions offered by the two “respondents” who critiqued the Initial Version. The respondents and other students are then to raise questions for the writer on the substance of the paper or on important methodological or structural issues; corrections concerning grammar, style, typographical errors, etc., are to be reserved for the Edited Copy. Other students are also free to ask questions and to make constructive comments on the substance of the paper. (10% of grade)

f. Final Version: The Final Version of the paper (submitted electronically) is to be sent to me. It should include any needed revisions based on advice from me and from the other students. (30% of grade)

Each written assignment submitted (whether by computer copy or by paper) must include the student’s name, date, course number and title, professor’s name, and title of assignment; it must have 1” to 1.5” page margins, with page numbers on each page (at least beginning with page 2). All main-body text should be in 12-point type and double-spaced. Any work longer than 1500 words must be subdivided into sections, with a title at the head of each section.
GRADIES

A summary of grade composition is given in the following table:

1. Attendance, Quizzes, & Brief Assignments: 10%
2. Oral Reports: 10%
3a. Topic Suggestions (with brief presentation): 5%
3b. Proposal (with brief presentation): 5%
3c. Initial Version: 20%
3d. Edited Copies (of others’ work): 10%
3e. Presentation: 10%
3f. Final Version: 30%

Total: 100%

Grading Scale: A=100, A-=97, B+=93, B=90, B-=87, C+=83, C=80, C-=77, D+=73, D=70, F=0. No late work of any kind will be accepted (except, at my discretion, for very serious reasons). Grades for papers are assigned according to my “Research Paper Grading Criteria” listed on the following two pages, which are based largely on DSPT’s Research Readiness Paper (RRP) Review Form, as well as DSPT’s Rubric for Life-long Learning and Rubric for Effective Leadership. The following table describes how grades are applied to students’ papers (applying analogously to presentations and other work):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>General Description</th>
<th>R.P. Grading Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Deep understanding and insights are expressed in a clear, penetrating, and engaging manner, with virtually no errors.</td>
<td>mostly “E”s, no “U”s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Content, structure, and expression are all adequate, free of significant faults.</td>
<td>no “U”s – or mostly “E”s with 1 or 2 “U”s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Effort is evident, but significant errors or shortcomings are also present.</td>
<td>a few “U”s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Many serious deficiencies in content, structure, and expression are present.</td>
<td>several “U”s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>There is a failure to execute the most basic elements of the assignment.</td>
<td>mostly “U”s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See the DSPT website for these Assessment forms (found among the Student Forms).
**RESEARCH PAPER GRADING CRITERIA** (Developed with the aid of Rubistar ©2010.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style</th>
<th>E – scholarly standards achieved w/ Excellence</th>
<th>S - scholarly standards achieved Satisfactorily</th>
<th>U - scholarly standards achieved Unsatisfactorily</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a. Sentence Structure</td>
<td>All sentences are well-constructed with appropriate variation in structure.</td>
<td>Nearly all sentences are well-constructed, with some variation in sentence structure.</td>
<td>Several sentences are not well-constructed, or there is too little variation in sentence structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b. Grammar &amp; Spelling</td>
<td>Student makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.</td>
<td>Student makes very few errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.</td>
<td>Student makes many errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1c. Capitalization &amp; Punctuation</td>
<td>Student makes no errors in capitalization or punctuation, so the essay is easy to read.</td>
<td>Student makes only a few errors in capitalization or punctuation, but the essay is still easy to read.</td>
<td>Student makes many errors in capitalization &amp;/or punctuation that often interrupt the flow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1d. Citation Procedures</td>
<td>Student makes no errors in footnote or documentation procedures.</td>
<td>Student makes only a few errors in footnote or documentation procedures; no important information is lacking.</td>
<td>Student makes many errors in footnote or documentation procedures, and/or important information is lacking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Resources</td>
<td>E – scholarly standards achieved w/ Excellence</td>
<td>S - scholarly standards achieved Satisfactorily</td>
<td>U - scholarly standards achieved Unsatisfactorily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a. Accuracy</td>
<td>All supportive facts and quotations are reported accurately.</td>
<td>Supportive facts and quotations are reported accurately, with only a few, minor exceptions.</td>
<td>Several supportive facts and quotations were inaccurately reported.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b. Quality of Sources</td>
<td>All sources used for quotes and evidence are credible &amp; relevant. Sources are always cited where needed, extensively or with great thoroughness.</td>
<td>All sources used for quotes and evidence are credible &amp; relevant. Sources are always cited where needed.</td>
<td>Some sources are not credible; or are irrelevant; or sources are sometimes not cited where needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c. Primary Sources</td>
<td>Student uses primary sources, incisively and accurately, as evidence for the main point and for other argumentation.</td>
<td>Student uses primary sources adequately as evidence for the main point and for other argumentation.</td>
<td>Student lacks primary sources where needed as evidence for the main point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2d. Secondary Sources</td>
<td>Secondary sources often support student’s presentation well (e.g., explaining context, background, or implications).</td>
<td>Secondary sources sometimes support student’s presentation (e.g., explaining context, background, or implications).</td>
<td>Secondary sources (where available) that support student’s presentation are lacking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation/Analysis</td>
<td>E – scholarly standards achieved w/ Excellence</td>
<td>S - scholarly standards achieved Satisfactorily</td>
<td>U - scholarly standards achieved Unsatisfactorily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a. Introduction</td>
<td>The Introduction explains the theme of the essay and outlines the main points to be discussed.</td>
<td>The Introduction presents the theme of the essay adequately.</td>
<td>The Introduction does not name the theme or does not preview what will be discussed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b. Relevance</td>
<td>Student explains direct connections between the paper’s ideas and the issues or concerns of contemporary Church, society, or academy, or offers creative arguments or proposals that show such connections.</td>
<td>Student briefly refers to some direct connections between the paper’s ideas and the issues or concerns of contemporary Church, society, or academy.</td>
<td>Student fails to point out the relevance of the paper’s ideas to the issues or concerns of contemporary Church, society, or academy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3c. Audience</td>
<td>The paper’s content is suited to potential readers’ background, using vocabulary and arguments appropriate for that audience, while also anticipating readers’ questions and providing thorough answers appropriate for that audience.</td>
<td>The paper’s content is suited to potential readers’ background, using vocabulary and arguments appropriate for that audience.</td>
<td>It is not clear for whom the student is writing (or the student aims at an audience inappropriate for the assignment).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3d. Thesis Statement</td>
<td>A thesis statement clearly states what conclusion the student will demonstrate.</td>
<td>A thesis statement can be discerned, expressing the conclusion the student will demonstrate.</td>
<td>A thesis statement does not appear and is not even discernible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3e. Analysis</td>
<td>Student shows and explains the important concepts, principles, or elements underlying the matter studied.</td>
<td>Student adequately shows concepts, principles, or elements underlying the matter studied.</td>
<td>Student does not adequately show concepts, principles, or elements underlying the matter studied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3f. Synthesis</td>
<td>Student finds concepts or explanations that unify or categorize seemingly disparate elements, either with difficult subject matter, or in a creative or particularly incisive way.</td>
<td>Student adequately finds concepts or explanations that unify or categorize seemingly disparate elements.</td>
<td>Student does not adequately unify or categorize the subject matter at hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3g. Reasoning</td>
<td>Student’s reasoning is logical and penetrating, yielding important insights.</td>
<td>Student’s reasoning is free of major errors.</td>
<td>Student’s reasoning is flawed in at least one essential point, or contains several errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3h. Sequencing</td>
<td>Arguments and support are provided in a logical order that makes it easy and interesting to follow the student’s train of thought.</td>
<td>Arguments and support are provided in an order that makes it possible to follow the student’s train of thought.</td>
<td>Some of the arguments or support are not in an expected or logical order, making it difficult to follow the student’s train of thought.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3i. Transitions</td>
<td>A variety of thoughtful transitions are used. They clearly show how ideas are connected.</td>
<td>Transitions adequately show how ideas are connected.</td>
<td>The transitions between ideas are often unclear or nonexistent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3j. Fairness</td>
<td>Opposing views are stated accurately, evenhandedly, and thoroughly; or criticism of the student’s chosen position is significantly addressed.</td>
<td>Opposing views are stated accurately and evenhandedly.</td>
<td>Views opposed to that of the student are given inadequate or dismissive treatment; or views supporting the student’s position are accepted too uncritically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3k. Conclusion</td>
<td>The conclusion clearly restates the student’s position and important implications of that position; areas for further exploration are also noted.</td>
<td>Student’s position is restated, with some consideration either of implications or areas for further exploration.</td>
<td>There is no true conclusion; the conclusion is either non-existent or contains mere generalities or irrelevant content.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
*Research Paper Details*

An academic paper may take one of many forms. It may describe the history of an idea, comment on a text, summarize a student’s own learning, or accomplish some other goal. However, the paper required for this course must be a research paper, in which the student must demonstrate that a particular thesis statement is true. Every part of the paper is to be directed toward that goal. The paper must also include (usually, in the conclusions) some account of the possible implications, application, or relevance of the subject of the paper’s conclusion, for today and the future. The ability to write this kind of paper is essential to the student’s ability to demonstrate learning at DSPT; and acquiring this skill will prepare the student for writing a Master’s thesis (which many must do as part of their program). Papers (including the Initial Version) must be written according to academic standards, in accord with the guidelines found in the latest edition of “Turabian.” The paper must be subdivided into sections, each with its own descriptive heading. This helps the writer to achieve clarity, and helps the reader to follow the writer’s thought. The bibliography for the paper should be focused and relevant to the topic (for the paper, it is to include only works cited). Generally, it is better to find a handful of relevant journal articles than a large number of more general books. The paper, and all written work, should be proofread before being submitted. A student whose first language is not English normally will need a native speaker’s help in this regard.

This Research Paper offers the student a prime opportunity for completing DSPT’s Research Readiness Paper (RRP) requirement (see DSPT website). Every DSPT degree program except the M.Div. requires the RRP; see Student Handbook (on the DSPT website).

For this course, I require each student to choose a theme that requires some kind of comparison, because a comparison forces the student into the position of doing his or her own analysis and evaluation. Such a comparison helps one avoid focusing on just one author’s work, which can lead the student into the trap of simply summarizing that author’s work. A graduate paper cannot simply be an exposition of another author’s ideas; there must be some kind analysis and synthesis at work. Regardless of what one writes, at the end of it, ask yourself, “Could my text help someone to understand something better than the source texts could, at least on one specific issue? Could my paper add anything to a theological conversation?” The answer should be “yes” to at least one of those questions.

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6 See Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers, 7th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). I strongly prefer footnotes over endnotes; I prefer the “Notes-Bibliography” citation style (as described in ibid., chaps. 16-17, pp. 141-215) to parenthetical reference style, although the latter is acceptable.

7 It is certainly possible (for another research paper for another context) to write on a single theologian or even on a single work. For example, consider all the scholarship on Thomas Aquinas’s thought. Sometimes, authors do not compare his work to anyone else’s work; occasionally, they do not even cite anyone but Thomas. For such a project to be successful, it has probably done at least one of the following: it has brought forth an aspect of Thomas’s thought that has been overlooked, or neglected, or poorly understood; or it has highlighted an aspect of it that may be particularly helpful for some current question; or it has discerned an idea in his work that is not obvious from any single text; or it has taken issue with some well-known interpretation of an aspect of Thomas’s thought; etc. There are many possibilities; but in all these cases, the writer of today is contributing some insight of his or her own, not simply repeating what another has already stated.
REQUIRED TEXTS:


Vatican Council I. Dei Filius: The Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith. Session 3 (24 April 1870). [available online]**

Note that each work or set of works marked with a double asterisk (**) need not require any purchase. All prices listed are as found at bookfinder.com (new/used, shipping included); prices may vary considerably. At my discretion, some additional readings may be assigned as the course progresses, depending on the students’ needs or interests, or other considerations.

If you are buying from Amazon.com, please consider ordering through the DSPT Amazon Bookstore at the DSPT website (http://astore.amazon.com/dspt-20/about).

Optional Reading

Excerpts from 20th-Century Theologians (to be distributed in class, according to students’ interests)


Postmodernism and Postliberalism:


Murphy, Nancey and James Wm. McClendon, Jr. “Distinguishing Modern and Postmodern Theologies.” *Modern Theology* 5.3 (Apr 1989): 191-212. [downloadable through GTU Library ATLA search]**


**Other themes:**


**Plan for the Semester**

Assignments are to be completed by the course date for which they are listed.

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09.02 **Course Introduction** (Students should arrive at class having a copy of this syllabus available for reference.)

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09.09 **Introduction to Theological Method**  
*ITC, Theology Today; Nichols, chaps. 1-2; chap. 19(a), pp. 263-310.*

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09.16 **Faith and Reason, and the Use of Philosophy in Theology**  
*Nichols, chaps. 3 & 7 (chaps. 4-6 optional); Dei Filius chap. 4; Humani Generis; Fides et Ratio*  
**Discussion of Topic Suggestions**

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09.23 **Introduction to St. Thomas Aquinas: SCG, ST, and The Compendium of Theology**  
*SCG: bk. I, Prolog and chaps. 1-9; bk. IV, chap. 1; ST: Prolog; and bk. I, q. 1, arts. 1-8;*  

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09.30 **Scripture and Tradition, part 1: Scripture**  
*Nichols, chaps. 8-12; Augustine, De Doctrina Christiana, Book I; ST I q. 1 art. 9-10;*  
**Topic Suggestions due**

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10.07 **Scripture and Tradition, part 2: Tradition**  
*Augustine, De Doctrina Christiana, Books II-III; Dei Filius, esp. Chap. 2; Dei Verbum, esp. nos. 1-13. Optional: Verbum Domini*  
**Proposal due**

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10.14 **Scripture and Tradition, part 3 (Continued)**  
*Nichols, chaps. 13-16.*

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10.21 **Reading Week – no class session**
10.28 **Revelation**  
*ST* II-II q. 1 art. 1-2, 3-5; q. 45, art. 2.  
Nichols, chaps. 17-18

11.04 **Theology and Magisterium**  
Ratzinger, *Nature and Mission of Theology*, pp. 7-41

11.11 **Theology and Magisterium**  
CDF, *The Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian*  
CDF, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Concluding Formula of the Professio fidei*.  

11.18 **Evaluating Theological Methodology – Some Prolegomena**  
*Two of the following (or others, according to student interest), to be distributed in class:*  
Barth, *Church Dogmatics* 1/1, prefaces & “The Task of Dogmatics,” pp. vii – 24;  
Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord* 1, Foreword & “Point of Departure and Concerns,” pp. 9-34;  

11.25 **Some Current Trends**  
(no reading assignment)

Initial Version due

12.02 **Course Summary**  
Edited Copies due

12.09 **Presentations**  
Presentations

12.19 *Friday - not a class period – paper due at 11 am*  
Final Version due